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Presentation Title: The Role Of Efficacy In Response To Climate Change Among Americans Of Diverse Racial And Ethnic Identities

Abstract: Existing research suggests that experiences of inequity and marginalization heighten concern about climate change (Pearson and Schuldt, 2018). Simultaneously, marginalization reduces power and opportunity to combat the problem, creating a potential efficacy gap. This research explored the role of efficacy in response to climate change among Americans of diverse racial and ethnic identities. Across two online studies (N1=235, N2=418) participants read news stories describing environmental injustices experienced by different communities in the U.S. Within the stories we attempted to either raise or decrease participants' efficacy: self-efficacy (perceived ability to produce a desired outcome); collective-efficacy (ability to generate an intended result as a collective); and response-efficacy (ability of an action to produce effective impact). Participants then rated their support for mitigation policies, emotions, belief and concern for climate change, intention to participate in activism, and levels of perceived efficacy. We also gathered demographic information such as age, gender, political affiliation, and racial and ethnic identity. Our findings suggest that priming issues of environmental injustice leads racial and ethnic minorities to express significantly higher levels of efficacy, concern, and intention to act compared to white-identifying participants. This held true even when efficacy was artificially decreased. Results also revealed interactions between racial/ethnic identity and political identity on emotional response to climate change and intended climate change activism. Across all studies, we found that bolstering response efficacy is most likely to increase concern for climate change and policy support, even among political conservatives. This research adds support to the growing awareness that effective climate solutions must engage and empower all communities in the United States, and this is best done by highlighting effective solutions (response efficacy). Communities of color are concerned and poised for action, ready to move the world toward a more sustainable future.